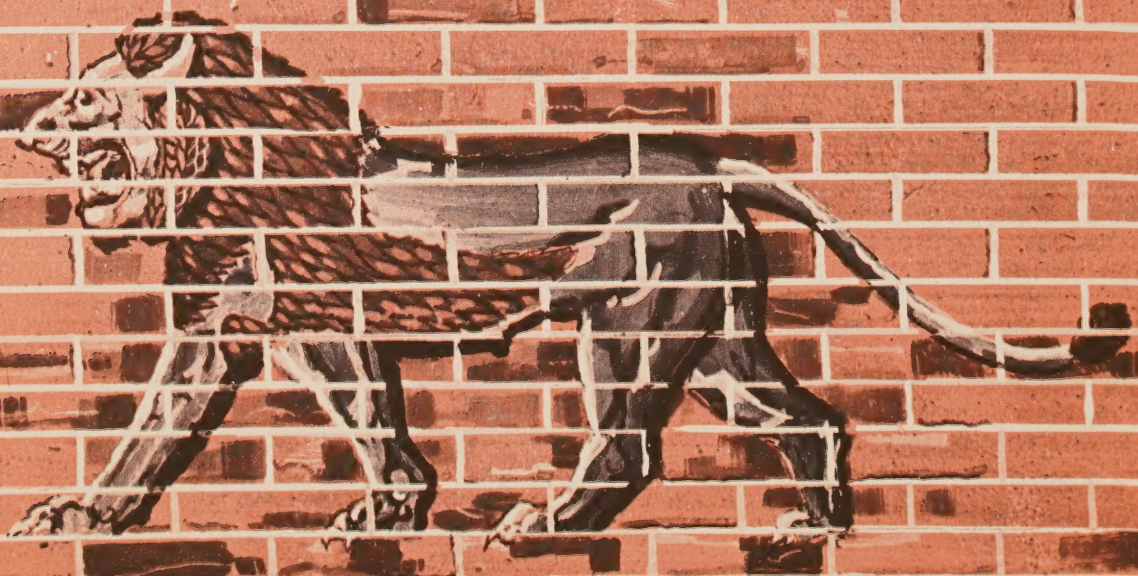


# Iraq

United for  
Mission







# The Republic of Iraq

## Statistical Information on Iraq

Population..... 6,952,000 — world rank 55  
 Area..... 171,600 sq. miles — world rank 43  
 People per sq. mile—41  
 Average annual output per person—\$151  
 Illiteracy—85%

Above information is from *A World of Facts*, produced by Civic Education Service, Inc.

## Population of largest cities:

Baghdad proper	735,714
Baghdad metropolitan	1,306,604
Mosul	179,646
Basrah	164,623
Kirkuk	120,593



Iraq is the descendant of two great nations of antiquity, Babylon and Assyria. Thanks to archaeology we know much of the life of these nations.

Ur of the Chaldeans, the home of Abraham, was located not far from modern Baghdad. Excavations have revealed a city much like the cities of today—narrow streets with little shops opening directly on the street. In these shops rugs, clothes, cooking utensils, perfumes and spices were for sale. Homes were of two stories, and built around a central pavement. Assyria, to the north, was more mountainous and less dependent on irrigation than Babylon. It was also more involved in continuous wars of conquest, marked by extreme cruelty against the conquered peoples. The Assyrians have been said to resemble the Romans, and the Babylonians, the Greeks.

Present day Iraqi look back, not to ancient Babylon or Assyria, but to the Muslim Abbasside Caliphate (750-1258 A.D.) as their golden era. The Caliph Mansur moved the capital of the Islamic Empire from Damascus to Baghdad which soon became a great center of international trade and politics.

This empire, too, declined and modern Iraq is the child of the Ottoman Empire, which was centered in Istanbul. Cities have grown rapidly in recent decades, but they are still divided into racial quarters as in the last century.

*Iraq Petroleum Company*



Heraldic symbols on the Ishtar Gate welcomed the traveller to ancient Babylon.

*Photo by Leon V. Kofod*



In Baghdad the new generation takes the center of the stage.

During the mandate period between the two World Wars, the beginnings of technical skill and organization were developed and since World War II independence and oil royalties have brought a new era of prosperity and hope to Iraq.

Income from oil has made possible the development of flood control and irrigation, communications, industrialization, agriculture, and housing. Hundreds of new schools and many hospitals have been built. The opening of new wide streets and the building of stores, offices, and homes have transformed Baghdad as well as other cities.

"All of these accomplishments are impressive; so too are the remaining problems. Cultural evolution takes longer than the physical, and the transformation of a desert community into a modern nation, even with oil and water, requires much thought."\*

\*This quotation and the information appearing in this first section are reprinted by permission from *CROSSROADS: LAND AND LIFE IN SOUTH-WEST ASIA* by George B. Cressey. Copyright 1960 by J. B. Lippincott Company.



It is in this situation of physical transformation and cultural problems, of national resources and unbelievable poverty, of a population 96% Muslim and 4% Christian, mainly of the ancient Orthodox Churches—in this situation, the United Mission in Iraq carries on its work.

## THE UNITED MISSION IN IRAQ

The United Mission in Iraq is the heir to work begun in the northern part of the country by the Church Missionary Society of England and in the south by the Board of World Missions of the Reformed Church of America. The work of the Church Missionary Society was halted by World War I, and in 1924 the United Mission in Iraq was formed of representatives of what are now the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In 1956 the Board of World Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States began participation in the United Mission in Iraq. The United Mission had responsibility for work in Baghdad and the cities of the north, but the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church in America continued its work begun in 1889 in Basrah and the south.



Baghdad High School's new campus is inspiring for both work and play.



Iraq has a bright future—if these girls of Baghdad High School are an indication.

January 1, 1962 is a significant date in the history of missions in Iraq. On that day the work in the south became a part of the responsibility of the United Mission in Iraq, and all Protestant workers in the country are now in one organization. For the first time in the development of missionary work in Iraq, the historic denominations having an active Christian concern for the Iraqi are united in one organized effort to proclaim the Gospel to them.

The Joint Committee for the United Mission in Iraq, composed of representatives of each of the four participating boards, is responsible for the administration of the Mission. Personnel are nominated by the boards, and when accepted by the Joint Committee, come under its direction.

All missionaries, irrespective of denominational background, are on equal basis as members of the Mission. They receive equal salary and allowances,



Pam  
Iraq  
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have the same terms of service and furloughs, and all are subject to assignment by the Mission. All property is supplied by and belongs to the Joint Committee. There is nowhere in missionary history a more advanced cooperative venture than this one.

## THE MISSION PROGRAM

Since the Revolution in 1958 the mission program in Iraq has of necessity been limited almost entirely to educational work. In Baghdad there is a high school for girls, and in Basrah an elementary school for girls and an intermediate school for boys.

Baghdad High School completed its thirty-fifth year in 1961. "Our theme for this school year is: 'We care'. This fits in with our purpose of seeking to build a Christian community where we can love and serve one another because we know and commit ourselves to God's love in Jesus Christ."

After a period characterized by a dearth of qualified personnel, a staff of able Iraqi and Americans has been built up and the standards of the school are being improved all along the line. A new building adds to the efficiency and pleasure of both students and faculty. Academic work is improving, extracurricu-



And these boys of the School of High Hope in Basrah are a part of that future.



Lessons are taken seriously, even at recess time.

lar activities are being developed. Plans for the future include curriculum changes, an individual counseling program, in-service teacher training, summer English courses, and a Parent-Teacher organization.

The two schools in Basrah have for some time specialized in service to the very poor of that city, and for this reason have received their total support from the Mission Board rather than from student fees. With the wider opportunities for government-provided education, this is no longer a necessity and fees are now being charged, with due regard to ability to pay. Both of these schools are now situated in the center of the city and are hoping to relocate where they will have more adequate facilities for building and for playground. The School of High Hope for Boys has a detailed plan for development, both academically and physically, which they hope to put into operation in the very near future. A part



of this plan is to complete the full high school program since this is the only Christian high school for boys in the entire area of the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf.

In Iraq there are six organized Protestant congregations and a number of unorganized groups. Until now these have been independent of each other, but there is reason to hope that soon they will come together to form a Protestant Church with a voice in the Near East Christian Council and the World Council of Churches, if they so choose.

It is also anticipated that by the end of 1962 the Christian message will be proclaimed to all Iraq over the air through one of the great cooperative projects of the century, Radio Voice of the Gospel in Addis Ababa. The Joint Committee for the United Mission in Iraq is participating in this venture through a proportionate share of the budget and is considering sharing in the appointment of staff personnel.

With all the fragmentations and tensions in the Middle East this coming together of Christian forces as they relate to Iraq is of refreshing significance to the Christian movement. The most difficult of problems and obstacles are met successfully when Christians work together in love and prayer.

*Board of World Missions, Reformed Church in America*



For more than forty years Ishkof Garabet has been pastor of the Evangelical Church in Basrah.

*Iraq Petroleum Company*



Canals are the highways of the Basrah district where the Tigris and Euphrates meet.

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